

COMPLETE SET OF CLAIMS PENDING
AFTER AMENDMENT OF OCTOBER 7, 2002

1. A method for facilitating a real-time chat session between a first user and a second user, both visiting a first web server, the method comprising:

receiving, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receiving, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;

receiving, from the first user, a request to open [one of a public chat session,] a semi-public chat session [and a private chat session] with the second user;

transmitting, to the second user, an indication that the first user has requested [one of the public chat session,] the semi-public chat session [and the private chat session]; and

receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to enter the semi-public chat session designated by the first user.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the [chat session is a] semi-public chat session [and wherein the chat session] is visible only to users having a predetermined user profile.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the providing step further comprises:
receiving, from the first user, a query for information regarding other users visiting the first web site; and
searching a user database to determine which users are visiting the first web site.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the query includes a request for other users having predetermined personal data.

7. (Amended) A method for providing usage information of a first web site designated by a user, the method comprising:

receiving, from the user, a designation of the first web site as a homepage, wherein the homepage is any web site on a communication network;

monitoring usage of the homepage by a plurality of users; and

transmitting data representative of the usage to the user when the user is connected to a communication network[visiting a second web page].

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

displaying to the user the usage information in a graphical format.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

displaying to the user the usage information in a text format.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage information is displayed automatically to the user.

11. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage information is displayed only upon a command generated by the user.

12. A computer-readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method for facilitating a chat session between a first user and second user, both visiting a first web server, the method comprising:

receiving, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receiving, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;

receiving, from the first user, a request to open [one of a public chat session,] a semi-public chat session [and a private chat session] with the second user;

transmitting, to the second user, an indication that the first user has requested [one of the public chat session,] the semi-public chat session [and the private chat session]; and

receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to enter the semi-public chat session designated by the first user.

13. An apparatus for facilitating a semi-public chat session between a first user and second

user, both visiting a first web server, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory storing processing instructions for controlling the processor, the processor operative with the processing instructions to:

receive, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receive, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

provide, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;

receive, from the first user, a request to open [one of a public chat session,] a semi-public chat session [and a private chat session] with the second user;

transmit, to the second user, an indication that the first user has requested [one of the public chat session,] the semi-public chat session [and a private chat session]; and

receive, from the second user, an acceptance to enter the semi-public chat session designated by the first user.

14. A computer-readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method for providing usage information of a first web site designated by a user, the method comprising:

receiving, from the user, a designation of the first web page as a homepage wherein the homepage is any web site on a communication network;

monitoring usage of the homepage by a plurality of users; and

transmitting data representative of the usage to the user when the user is connected to the communication network [visiting a second web page].

15. An apparatus for providing usage information of a first web site designated by a user, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory storing processing instructions for controlling the processor, the processor operative with the processing instructions to:

receive, from the user, a designation of the first web page as a homepage wherein the homepage is any web site on a communication network;

monitor usage of the homepage by a plurality of users; and

transmit data representative of the usage to the user when the user is connected to the communication network [visiting a second web page] .

16. A method for facilitating a communication between a first user and second user, both visiting a first web server, the method, comprising:

receiving, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receiving, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID; and

receiving, from the first user, a request to communicate with the second user.

17. The method of claim 16, further comprising:

transmitting, to the second user, an indication that the first user has requested a communication; and

receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to receive a communication from the first user.

18. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for performing a method for facilitating a communication between a first user and second user, both visiting a first web server, the method comprising:

receiving, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receiving, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID; and

receiving, from the first user, a request to communicate with the second user.

19. An apparatus for facilitating a communication between a first user and second user, both visiting a first web server, the apparatus comprising:

a processor; and

a memory storing processing instructions for controlling the processor, the processor operative with the processing instructions to:

receive, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receive, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

provide, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;

receive, from the first user, a request to communicate with the second user; and

provide to the second user an address for communicating with the second user.

Please add the following new claim.

20. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage information comprises of an indication of a most-popular next-visited web site for the plurality of users;

an indication of web sites visited by the plurality of users prior to visiting the first web site; and

an indication of when and for how long the plurality of users visited the first web site.